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From: Larry Brill/R1/USEPA/US

To: James Owens/R1/USEPA/US@EPA; Rich Cavagnero/R1/USEPA/US@EPA

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Subject: Fw: Article in Today's S-T

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ElaineT Stanley/R1/USEPA/US 09/09/2009 09:18 AM		
	To	Dave Dickerson/R1/USEPA/US@EPA, Jeanethe Falvey/R1/USEPA/US@EPA, David Peterson/R1/USEPA/US@EPA, Cynthia Catri/R1/USEPA/US@EPA, ManChak Ng/R1/USEPA/US@EPA, Larry Brill/R1/USEPA/US@EPA, cianciarulo.bob@epa.gov
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Note talk of the ESD at the end of the article.

Stimulus funds buoy harbor cleanup

By **BECKY W. EVANS**

September 09, 2009 12:00 AM

NEW BEDFORD — Dredging of hazardous waste at the New Bedford Harbor Superfund site is moving at a quicker pace due to federal recovery funds that have nearly tripled the amount of toxic sediment environmental crews will remove from the harbor bottom this year.

But full remediation of the PCB-polluted harbor will take decades to complete if Congress maintains current funding levels. The \$30 million in recovery money, awarded in April by EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, will shave about three years off the project's time line, leaving about 34 to 35 more years of dredging, said EPA project manager Elaine Stanley.

Annual dredging operations, which usually ramp up in August and end in October, got under way in early June and are

expected to continue through November, Stanley said.

Dredging activity is focused in subtidal areas of the upper harbor, just south of Wood Street.

"We already did some dredging north of Wood Street and really want to minimize recontamination," Stanley said. "We are trying to get as much of the subtidal area as we can. It's where some of the highest contamination is."

Electrical parts manufacturers polluted New Bedford Harbor with PCBs and heavy metals during the 1940s through the 1970s. The 18,000-acre polluted area was listed as a Superfund site in 1983.

The EPA is now in its sixth season of full-scale dredging. Dredged material is processed at local dewatering and desanding facilities before being shipped by rail to a licensed PCB landfill in Michigan.

The project's dredging and processing operations were originally designed to run year-round, allowing the project to be completed in five years with an \$80 million annual budget. The project has dragged on due to limited funding from Congress. The project receives \$15 million per year, allowing for about two months of dredging.

EPA officials are investigating alternative cleanup strategies — such as confined aquatic disposal where pollutants are buried in pits in the harbor and capped with clean sediment — that could shorten the length of the project.

Recovery Act funding has extended the 2009 dredging season by four months, allowing for removal of a greater volume of contaminated sediment, Stanley said.

So far this year, a hydraulic dredge has sucked up 30,000 cubic yards of sediment. A total of up to 65,000 cubic yards will be dredged by the end of the season. In previous years, dredging removed about 20,000 to 25,000 cubic yards per year.

The recovery money will allow for an extended dredging season in 2010, as well.

"We are spreading the \$30 million over two years," Stanley said.

Related to the project, the EPA is seeking public comment through Sept. 15 regarding continued temporary storage of contaminated materials at its Sawyer Street facility. The EPA is using a containment cell with a single liner, rather than the state-required double liner, to store contaminated materials containing PCBs and trichloroethylene.

The EPA contends that the single liner in combination with an underlying clay layer and site monitoring is as protective as the double liner.

Public comments may be sent via e-mail to NBH_comments@epa.gov or sent in the mail to: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Region I — New England

One Congress Street, Suite 1100, HBO

Boston, MA 02114-2023

Attn: Elaine Stanley, Co Remedial Project Manager